

Dragonhyde

by JoshNeku

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Summary: Dragons and Vikings have been at war for generations. Vikings capture the dragons and use them to help train younger Vikings. Reiku is terrified of dragons, but reluctantly becomes friends with a special Night Fury, something Elder Xehanort may be all too happy about. Triple crossover with KH, HTTYD, and TWEWY. VanRei, JoshNeku, AkuRoku, with hints of Cleon, Zemyx. T to be safe.

1. Flames of Premonition

Flames of Premonition

****This is actually my first HTTYD story I've written, but it's a crossover, so...yeah...****

****Well, anyway, this is a story me and my friend, Animesaki, are doing. She's my co-author/beta/etc person! :D Thank you for all your help~****

****Also, yes the title of this story is spelled correctly, so don't correct me on how 'hyde' is spelled since that is how we wanted to spell it.****

****Also for those of you who haven't read my other Rei/Van stories, Reiku is Riku Repilca. Calling him Reiku is just easier than calling him that.****

****As for updates, I'm not sure. Perhaps every month? Or earlier. I'm trying to focus more on my originals than fanfics, but since it's summer and I've already signed up for classes for fall, I got a lot of free time so we'll see. I might also base it off of how many reviews I get.****

****And no just 'please update, I like it'. I do enjoy them because it**

makes me feel fluffy inside, but they get a bit tedious after a while and it doesn't give me any idea on HOW you liked it or what about the story made you like it.**

This is also on JoshNeku on AO3 since I'm there, too.

Anyway, I don't own HTTYD, KH, and TWEWY; yes it will have TWEWY characters and pairings.

Please Read and Review. :3

* * *

><p>The flames were hot and stifling as they continued licking at the wooden walls and thatch roof of the small house, causing it to creak and crackle piteously as it was eaten by the red-hot teeth.

Portions of beam and patches of blazing straw dropped from the ceiling as the weakening structure creaked dangerously, about to cave.

The silver-haired eight-year-old boy coughed from the dense smoke clogging the house, the heavy beam lying diagonally across his back, still pinning him to the ground, smolder filling his lungs and causing his vision to turn hazy.

"_Rikuâ€¦!_" the child squeaked, aquamarine eyes desperately scanning the house for any sign of his elder brother._

Riku had to be somewhere. Their rooms were side by side so surely he would have come directly to Reiku's room to gather his younger brother and save him from the fire. But there was the chance that Riku had thought that Reiku had already gotten out of the burning house and was unaware that his sibling was going to die of smoke inhalation before the flames would finally consume his body, leaving nothing but other Vikings to find his charred husk when they began to clean up the damage.

Once again, Reiku pushed his hands against the warm floor, struggling to draw himself up on his trembling arms, attempting to shove the beam off his back. The smoldering parts of the rafter oppressively pressed against his back began to burn through the light shirt he wore and seared the skin beneath, but Reiku barely registered the sensation of pain as his flesh burned from the smolders.

The boy collapsed again as the weight of the beam became too much for his weak arms to continue supporting, breathing heavily. He shoved against the floor again in another weak attempt to shove the beam off.

Reiku glanced around the dim room, pieces of flaming wood and thatch dropping to the floor and setting alight anything that wasn't on fire.

"_Dad?"_

_More pieces of the roof collapsed as the fire burned faster, getting closer to Reiku's trapped form as if eager to start feasting on the

boy._

He was going to die there. No one was going to find him until the house was reduced to blackened tinder and the clean-up and clear out of destroyed houses began.

The silverette lay there as the fire continued to crackle, his hearing beginning to fade as his body started to pass out. His only relief was that he would at least be unconscious when the fire started eating at his flesh and would be unable to feel the pain.

"â€"kuâ€|.!"_

The boy blinked as the black claws of unconsciousness slowly released him, reluctant to let Reiku stay in the conscious realm in the minutes before his death.

Had that been his imagination? Was his smoke-clogged mind playing tricks on him, making him believe that in the last moments of his life he had heard a voice calling for him, someone searching for him through the flames?

"Reiku!"

The voice was low and rough and laced with a panic and worry Reiku had never heard before.

It was his dad!

Reiku glanced up with an eagerness he knew he shouldn't have, hearing the sound of rapid footsteps approaching, mingling with the crackling of the fire. Someone really was there! Someone was coming for him!

"Dad?" he questioned weakly, hoping that he would actually make it out of the blazing house alive.

Sephiroth was the best when it came to dealing with dragon-related incidents. Reiku and the whole village knew how brave and fearless he was when it came to facing danger with unwavering courage.

"Reiku!" the voice called again, louder this time.

Sephiroth was getting closer to where Reiku was trapped and the boy was beginning to swell with relief. He would live to see the next day.

"Dad!"

A tall man in his early thirties appeared amidst the flames, lengthy mane of silver hair set aglow by the flickering flames and making him appear like a god coming to see the destruction of the world as it burned.

Pale green eyes scanned the house before widening when they spotted Reiku, unnatural cat-like pupils dilating to adjust to the smoky atmosphere.

"_Reiku!"_

Immediately, Sephiroth strode toward his trapped son, long legs causing him to reach the beam in a few steps, the fire seeming to not affect him.

The man easily pushed the beam off Reiku with his amazing strength, ignoring the thud the piece of wood created as it hit the floor, gathering the boy into his arms and holding him close in a protective gesture.

Quickly, Sephiroth made his way through the burning maze, holding Reiku tightly as he was afraid of losing one of his precious sons, halting when a beam landed in front of him with a crash, sending hot embers scattering into the dense air. He bared his teeth slightly at the blockage keeping him from reaching the outside, Sephiroth looked around for another way out.

There had to be another way. There just had to be. All the silver-haired man could see was flames and smoke, hearing the dangerous noise of the house beginning to collapse under its weakened weight.

Alarmed at the rapidly deteriorating house, Sephiroth tossed Reiku outside without a second thought, concerned more for his son's safety than his own. He would rather save Reiku and let himself be sacrificed than allow both of them to die and leave Riku all alone.

Reiku gave a small yelp as he landed on the cool grass, rolling a few feet from the force of the throw until he landed on his stomach.
Slowly shaking his head, Reiku glanced up as he heard loud cracking and splintering coming from his house, belatedly realizing that Sephiroth was not beside him.

Sephiroth was still trapped inside the burning home.

The young boy watched in horror as the house finally caved in as the flames finally claimed the remainder of the house's supporting structures and collapsed with a resounding crash, sending cinders and smoke into the black night sky.

Reiku screamed his grief and pain, tears streaming down his face as his hands grasped the grass beneath him, barely hearing the sounds other crackling houses and screams of fighting Vikings and roaring dragons in the distance.

"_Dad!"_

* * *

><p>Reiku bolted upright in his bed, panting as the thin brown blanket sank to this waist and pooled around his hips, cold sweat forming on his bare back and forehead like condensation.<p>

It had been nine years since the incident in which Sephiroth had sacrificed himself to save Reiku and every time Reiku had the nightmare of what had happened that night he knew what was going to occur.

There would be a dragon raid at some point later that night.

Reiku sighed as he calmed down, running a hand through his damp silver hair in an effort to soothe himself.

He would have to tell Riku of his nightmare who would in turn warn the village elder of the possible upcoming dragon attack so that everyone could be prepared. Animals would be rounded up and boarded up to prevent the dragons from picking them off to take them off to who knows where and large torches would be raised and lit so the Vikings could see the dragons flying around the dark sky, making it easier to attack them.

That had been the life of the Vikings for many centuries, fighting the dragons that stole livestock and fish from their village. It had only been in the last fifty years that they had begun to capture the dragons, placing them in cages specifically designed to keep them in, and used them to train young Vikings in how to combat them.

Throwing the blanket off him, Reiku placed his feet on the cold wood floor and stood up, pushing his sleeping pants off his hips in a fluid movement before tossing them on the bed. He turned slightly, searching for some clothes to put on for the day, revealing a nasty burn scar stretching from the back of his right arm to the bottom of his left shoulder blade.

The burn was another reminder of that cursed night where he had almost died, but didn't actually bother Reiku physically and it was usually hidden by his shirt so no one else in the village could see it, but the burn disturbed him emotionally since it was a reminder of Sephiroth's sacrifice. It was something Reiku would never forgive himself for, feeling that it was his fault Sephiroth had died in the first place.

After finding a pair of brown trousers and a short-sleeved grey tunic that would suffice, Reiku padded downstairs after putting them on, spotting Riku at the hearth making porridge for breakfast. He was always up before Reiku, usually by an hour, and Reiku had started to become used to the ritual of Riku already making breakfast by the time he was heading downstairs.

Riku was two years older than Reiku with slightly paler skin and the one who had taken care of Reiku after Sephiroth had died; their mother had passed after giving birth to Reiku so Reiku had never known her and Riku barely remembered her. Sephiroth had been both mother and father to them until his death then Riku had taken the role upon himself for the sake of Reiku.

With silver hair reaching inches past his shoulders and bright blue-green eyes, a lot of the villagers thought he looked a lot like Sephiroth and many of them expected Riku to keep up Sephiroth's legacy of being a ruthless dragon killer.

Riku was already wearing his loose blue trousers and black tunic with a white sleeveless jerkin over the shirt, obviously prepared for a day out. Reiku spotted the stiff white brace of deer bone around Riku's left wrist, a reminder of the time Riku had gotten his wrist broken by the precise whip of a Nadder's swift tail. It had never properly set right after the injury, but that didn't stop Riku from continuing to fight dragons, always managing to protect his

vulnerable side from attack.

Riku glanced behind him when he heard Reiku coming down the stairs, pausing in his stirring as he smiled gently.

"Hey," he greeted casually, turning back to the cooking porridge.
"Sleep well?"

Reiku nodded absently to Riku's question as the older sibling poured some honey and sprinkled a bit of mint into the porridge just the way he knew Reiku liked it, conscious as usual to his brother's likes and dislikes.

"Mm-hm. But I had the nightmare."

Riku hummed softly, already used to the response Reiku gave about how he slept during certain nights, dispensing a spoonful of the porridge into a bowl and holding it out to Reiku.

"I'll tell the elder then," he murmured as his brother reached for the offered item.

Reiku gave another nod, accepting the bowl as he sat at the small table beside the hearth, pouring himself a cup of lukewarm buttermilk.

Riku stood up after getting himself a bowl, sitting in the seat across from Reiku, joining his younger brother at the table. He quietly ate a few bites, watching Reiku with hawk eyes as if waiting for the silver-haired boy to do something. Riku gave a soft sigh, mixing it with a huff to get his brother's attention.

"Don't forget about dragon training around the beginning of the afternoon today."

Reiku choked on his bite of porridge, staring at Riku in astonishment as he dropped his spoon back into the bowl. Had Riku said what he thought he said?

"What?!" Reiku asked in a strangled voice, praying that he had misheard Riku and was still half-asleep or high-strung from the remnants of the nightmare.

"I signed you up for dragon training." Riku said simply, slurping his porridge as if this was a typical conversation that the two brothers shared every day.

Reiku slammed his hands on the table in protest. "Ri!"

Riku set down his spoon, staring at Reiku calmly in a way that Reiku was reminded of the way Sephiroth looked just before one of them would get a lecture. The look made Reiku grit his teeth, upset that Riku did look so much like their late father.

"Sorry, Rei, but you're of age and you have to get over your fear of dragons."

Reiku gripped the edge of the table, trembling slightly.

Get over his fear? After being trapped in a burning house set on fire

by a Gronckle? When his dad, Riku's dad, died saving him from burning? There was no way that he could get over that phobia so easily, not when he felt so guilty that he had been the indirect cause of their father's death.

Requesting that he attend dragon training was like rubbing salt in the wound.

"That's easier said than done, Rei," Reiku whispered, attempting to keep the waver out of his voice so that Riku wouldn't try and comfort him as he usually did when he realized his brother was upset over things that happened in the past.

The older sibling sighed in mild resignation, standing up from his seat, already finished with his breakfast. He was typically a fast eater, as was any Viking bred to fight dragons at a moment's notice.

"I know, Rei." Riku assured as he set his bowl in the sink which was carved from a large slab of dark-colored rock. "But I'll be in your class and so will Sora and Ven."

Sora was Riku's boyfriend. They had been friends since they had been five and had started dating at fourteen. Sora's father had also died in the attack that had killed Sephiroth and Leon had practically adopted the sweet brunette since he had no one else to care for him.

Reiku bit his lip, still unsure about the idea of dragon training as many scenarios began to race through his mind.

What if he froze up during it? What if the dragon solely targeted him because it sensed he was terrified?

"I'll go tell the elder." Riku announced as he headed to the front door, stepping into his shoes set at the threshold. "Then I'm meeting with Sora."

Reiku nodded in response to what Riku was saying even though he was barely listening, stirring his porridge listlessly, not at all that hungry anymore at the thought of attending dragon training.

"Don't forget dragon training." Riku reminded quietly, opening the front door.

"Okay." Reiku responded automatically as the front door shut, leaving him alone with his thoughts about what he was going to do.

After a few seconds he sighed, shoving the bowl away from himself and standing up.

He needed to go talk to Cloud. Cloud always had good answers to his problems.

* * *

><p>"Elder Xehanort?" Riku questioned as he respectfully knocked on the door of the dilapidated house situated near the far back of the village, far away from the main commons. "Are you in?"<p>

Xehanort was not only the elder of the village but the chief as well. He had founded the village in his youth, naming the tiny settlement after the Life Tree because of how warm the island remained year round, and had been a terrifying dragon killer; Xehanort the Heartless was a name practically every Viking knew and dreaded. He was more famous than Sephiroth, the Silver Demon.

Even at the age of sixty-eight, Xehanort was still very powerful despite his broad, hunched shoulders and crooked back. The feeble appearance he wore belied his true strength and agility. He was still very much powerful and that was what warranted respect from the villagers.

Xehanort also dressed the most elaborate in the village with a white sleeveless tunic beneath a white and black coat that had red inner lining and wide sleeves as well as black trousers.

"Ah, yes, come in, Riku." Xehanort's voice sounded from inside as the clinking of something was heard.

It sounded like bottles of some sort, as if Xehanort were moving them around, but Riku wasn't entirely certain. He wasn't one to judge what the elder was doing in his private home during his own time.

Riku slowly entered the house, being careful not to push the warped door off its rusted hinges. The silver-haired teen still wondered why Xehanort refused to keep his house defended by updating the rotting wood and changing out the door for a stronger one that would help better keep his home from falling victim to a dragon's attack.

Inside, the house was cleaner, looking like a newer home than it did from the outside as if Xehanort were keeping up with the old saying of 'Don't judge a book by its cover', and had several homemade shelves lined along the walls with books that Xehanort had written himself or had gathered in the travels of his adolescence.

The skin of a Night Fury lay on the middle of the floor like an exotic rug, haunting pale green eyes staring at the ceiling; no one knew exactly how Xehanort had managed to find a Night Fury, let alone kill it, and that was why many feared and respected him as no one else had completed such a feat since the dragon was extremely elusive.

Xehanort sat at a table, scribbling something on a sheet of parchment with a charcoal pencil. Riku wasn't certain about what he was writing but it could have been another account of the adventures of his youth or a list of what was needed for the trader that would be visiting the island soon.

The elder glanced up as Riku paused several feet away from the desk, thin eyebrows rising slightly as his gold eyes stared at Riku stonily. The way he looked at Riku reminded the silver-haired teen of someone sizing up a horse to see if it fit their needs.

Finally, Xehanort smiled in a way that made Riku's hair stand on end. It was a smile reminiscent of someone ready, and eager, to spill blood at the drop of a silver coin.

"Good morning, Riku," Xehanort greeted pleasantly, setting his pencil

down and interlocking his fingers to show that he was ready to listen to whatever was being said to him. "What can I do for you?"

Riku cleared his throat, maintaining eye contact with the tan, bald-headed man. He had to show that Xehanort did not intimidate him or make his skin crawl just by being in his presence; there was just something about Xehanort that did not settle comfortably with Riku.

"Reiku says there may be a dragon raid tonight."

"Oh?" Xehanort questioned, idly stroking his curled, silver goatee as he leaned back in his chair, taking in what Riku had told him. "Well, thank you for informing me, Riku."

The chair creaked slightly as Xehanort leaned forward, golden eyes glancing back down at the parchment as he began to write again.

Riku took that gesture as his cue to leave and turned around, making his way back to the door. He didn't want to spend any more of his time there than he already had; he had promised to meet up with Sora anyway and he had already taken too long.

After the front door had shut, a slow, cruel smile made its way onto Xehanort's face.

* * *

><p>The hoe struck the loose ground and Cloud glanced up from his work, blue eyes controlled. He was normally a calm person, but there were times that he lost control of his emotions.<p>

"You can't keep letting the guilt control you," he murmured, pushing his damp spiky blond hair out of his face so he could see better.

Cloud was twenty-one and the older brother of Ventus and Roxas, the twins being Sora's friends.

The three had their own cabbage patch beside their house which Cloud took immense care of and was more than willing to share the vegetable with the rest of the village when needed.

There was a rumor circulating around the village that Cloud was dating Leon, a farmer much like himself, though it had yet to be proven true. At the very least the two were friends because of the relationship between Cloud's brothers and Sora.

Reiku sighed, leaning against the side of Cloud's house with his arms crossed as he watched the blond continue tilling the soil to prepare the land for planting more cabbage seeds.

He should have expected such a response from Cloud; apparently something had happened several years ago and the blond had almost lost a dear friend to a dragon attack, but Cloud never went into further detail about the incident, just mentioning his friend had survived but not without severe burn scars on his back. He never even revealed his friend's name.

Cloud stopped in his work again, wiping his hands on his dark

trousers to brush off the dirt before pulling at his sleeveless black tunic in an attempt to cool himself off, gazing at Reiku blankly as he breathed out.

"Don't you have dragon training soon?"

* * *

><p>Reiku grumbled to himself as he made his way to the dragon arena, a several foot deep pit with metal bars and links set over the top like a dome to stop the dragons from flying out. The arena was set in the center of the island, the centerpiece of the village.<p>

Inside the crater were five cages with big metal doors blocked with thick logs to prevent the captured dragons from breaking out; each door had a lever to open it, though one cage had the lever on the outside of the arena.

Currently, the pit contained three dragons: a Gronckle, a Deadly Nadder, and the ferocious Monstrous Nightmare.

Every so often though, it appeared as if the dragons managed to somehow smash free of their confinement despite the heavy locks and disappear, leaving several Vikings to try and capture more dragons during raids to replace the missing ones; they did need a certain amount of dragons within the arena to use as practice to hone the skills of Vikings-to-be.

Weapons and shields lay scattered on the ground, to be used during training sessions in order to beat the dragon the students were faced with without actually killing the beast. It had become a tradition that only the last student to make it to the finals got the honor of killing a dragon of their choosing.

Reiku sighed to himself as he entered the arena, noticing that he was the first one of his class to arrive. He honestly hadn't expected for Riku to be there waiting for him with Sora by his side and usually wherever Sora was Ventus followed.

But just because his brother and boyfriend weren't there didn't mean Reiku was alone.

Seifer and his two friends were there.

Seifer was part of the disciplinary committee, a group he had created to guard Yggdrasil by protecting the town from unruly Vikings though that mostly just meant Cid, who was usually drunk.

However despite the name, they were just bullies, using their committee to gloss over what they actually did, and mostly picked on Reiku because they knew of his fear of dragons and enjoyed exploiting the silver-haired boy's phobia in any way possible.

Seifer smirked as he spotted Reiku warily entering the arena, blue-green eyes sparking mischievously as he brushed his hands on his dark brown trousers before pulling at the white long-tailed jerkin that he wore; the jerkin covered a blue tunic cut at the base to reveal several inches of Seifer's toned stomach.

Reiku always thought that the way Seifer dressed was a way to try and

attract females to him, but he had yet to see the females crowding around him like moths to a flame.

"Well, well, lookie who's come to join the party."

Reiku grimaced when the twenty-four-year-old trotted over to him with his two friends tagging behind him as if they were glued to his side which most of the time they were since the three were rarely seen separated from each other.

Seifer's blond hair was practically hidden under a black cap of thick wool, but it didn't manage to hide the diagonal scar sloping to the right on his forehead. Seifer claimed the scar had been caused by the needle of a Deadly Nadder's tail, but Reiku didn't believe him. It could have just been a story that Seifer told to make himself appear macho.

"Hey, hey," Seifer said as he dropped his arm around Reiku's shoulders to stop him, grinning down at Reiku. "Where are you going?"

"Seifer wants to talk with you, you know?" Raijin stated, brown eyes hard in an attempt to be intimidating though the effect didn't work on Reiku who had been more intimidated by an irate Sephiroth than a mindless sheep that followed the leader.

Raijin, though he liked to be called Rai for short, was a year younger than Seifer, standing slightly taller than the blond, with a muscular body and tan skin.

His black hair was short and he wore an orange sleeveless shirt and baggy dark pants with a necklace that had a thunderbolt-shaped pendant made of a lightweight metal hanging from the end of the thin links.

Rai was the muscle in the group and had supposedly broken a Gronckle's neck when he had been younger. There was no real proof behind the story, but a lot of people believed it.

"Affirmative." Fuu put in, her burnt sienna eye blinking blankly.

Fuu's light-colored steel-blue hair fell across the left side of her face and dropped to the bottom of her jaw to cover her left eye, leaving the right one exposed.

She was the most toned down in the group in terms of clothing, wearing a sleeveless blue tunic and pale trousers cut at the knees.

Fuu was the brains in the group despite how little she spoke, three years younger than Seifer and had apparently caused a Nightmare to back down by simply staring at it.

"Leave me alone, Seifer." Reiku grumbled, pushing the blond's arm off him and starting to walk away.

Riku had told him that ignoring Seifer was the best route instead of giving into whatever he said so that's what Reiku did; he ignored Seifer to the best of his ability despite how the blond always

attempted to get under his skin.

"Oh, come on!" Seifer said, putting his arm back around the teen's shoulders, yanking back slightly to stop Reiku once again. "I want to show you something."

Before Reiku could react or ask what exactly the blond wanted to show him, Seifer gripped both of his shoulders hard and started pushing him to a nearby cage where Rai stood near the lever that opened it on the outside of the arena.

When had Rai even left the arena to get there? He must have left while Reiku was distracted by Seifer.

Reiku, however, knew what waited inside the cage and desperately began to dig his heels into the smooth metal floor in an attempt to stop Seifer from continuing to push him.

"Stop it, Seifer!"

"What's the matter?" Seifer asked with a smirk, ignoring the way Reiku was clawing at his hands to try and get him to let go. "Don't want to see a Monstrous Nightmare up close and personal?"

The dragon inside the enclosure snarled and rattled the door before roaring, banging against the door.

Seifer laughed at Reiku's terrified expression.

"Oi, Almasy!" a voice rang out, causing the blond to halt and Rai to immediately release the lever. "Leave Reiku alone."

Seifer sighed in mild disappointment, releasing his grip on Reiku's shoulders and casually raising his hands in the air, smiling faintly.

"Okay, okay, Mr. Fair."

Zack Fair the Righteous was the dragon trainer teacher and had extensive knowledge of almost every dragon the village knew of or had captured, compiling everything he knew into a book that every Viking was required to read.

Zack was well-built and had short, spiky black hair with bangs framing his face and clear sky blue eyes. His favorite weapon was one he had created himself, a large blade he called the Buster Sword; despite its obvious weight, Zack was able to wield the weapon with ease.

Seifer turned, barely brushing against Zack's shoulder as he strode past him, flicking his hand as he went to summon Fuu and Rai.

"C'mon, guys. It was getting boring anyway."

"Confirmatory." Fuu murmured as she closely trailed after the blond.

"Yeah, it wasn't fun anymore, you know!" Rai shouted, catching up to Seifer and Fuu as they exited the pit.

Riku scowled after Seifer as he entered the pit just seconds after the blond had left, immediately making his way over to the frozen Reiku, gently placing a hand on his brother's shoulder.

"Rei, it's okay now."

Reiku started slightly at the touch, looking at Riku with huge eyes before clinging to him, trembling as he gripped Riku's shirt tightly.

Automatically, Riku wrapped his arms around Reiku and held him close, petting his brother's hair to soothe him.

Next time he would have to make sure Seifer and his gang weren't training before their class started. Riku didn't want Seifer attempting to put his little brother into a dragon's cage again. And if he did try again, Riku would make sure to talk to Xehanort about what Seifer and his goons were attempting to do on a practically daily basis.

"Ri-Ri?" a gentle voice asked, causing Riku to look up to see a spiky-haired brunette staring at him with innocent blue eyes similar to a young child not quite comprehending what was happening in front of him.

"Hey, Sora." he greeted softly as a blond a year younger than him entered the arena, Zack shutting the metal door behind him to prevent the dragons from leaving in the middle of training.

Ventus came up to them, ocean blue eyes wondering what was going on.

Even though Ventus and Roxas were identical twins there were a few ways to tell them apart as Ventus's eyes had a grey tint to them while Roxas's were pure blue.

While Ventus wore grey trousers and a white tunic with a black jerkin, Roxas wore black trousers and a black tunic with a white and black jerkin.

Whereas Ventus wanted to be in dragon training, Roxas had refused, choosing instead to become an apprentice to the village's local grouch, Vexen the medical doctor who had broad expertise on all sorts of herbs and spices that he used for wounds among other things.

Roxas was also terrified of Monstrous Nightmares though no one was quite certain why he was scared of them.

"What's going on?" Ventus asked as Zack began to announce that the training would begin soon and to get ready.

"Just Seifer and his gang being asses." Riku muttered venomously, still holding onto Reiku.

Sora patted Reiku's back sympathetically, understating Reiku's dilemma since Seifer had picked on him until he had started dating Riku; Seifer never picked on Reiku whenever Riku was around him though so Sora had realized that Seifer was either intimidated by

Riku or scared of him for some reason.

"All right, you guys!" Zack called, causing the teens to look in his direction. "Training's starting!"

* * *

><p>Reiku stared in horror, frozen in terror by the multiple dragons flying around and the screams of the Vikings fighting them off.<p>

He wasn't concerned that he could easily be picked off where he was, standing petrified out in the open. Half of his mind told him to hide in the nearest house.

Like he had predicted, the dragon raid was happening. The lanterns had been lit and raised up to reveal the dragons flying through the dark sky, making it easier for the Vikings to attack them.

Already, a Viking had captured a Terrible Terror with a net as well as a Hideous Zippleback.

Two more dragons for the arena, filling the last two cages in the arena.

A male in his early twenties ran through the buzzing village, pushing a strange wooden contraption in front of him, dark silver hair and golden yellow eyes standing out in the night.

The man was Sho, the assistant to Cid, the village's (practically) insane inventor.

Cid wasn't that insane, though as he had invented a lot of useful things.

The bola whip (single and two weight), a heavy net that held down the more powerful dragons long enough for the Vikings to grab before they could get free. He had also created helpful inventions around the village, too, like the dragon arena.

Sho headed to the open outskirts of the village, opening the contraption and setting up two curved wood pieces before pulling a thick string back and gazing through a small circular ring, closing an eye to get better accuracy.

The silver-haired male muttered numbers under his breath, slowly moving the mechanism as he followed the dragons soaring around, searching for the perfect target to attack.

He aimed at one stupidly hovering nearby then fired, a two rock bola sling whipping out.

The dragon Sho had been aiming for avoided the bola at the last minute, but the weapon still managed to catch something that Sho hadn't seen in the dark night sky.

He heard its roar as it fell into the nearby forest, a faint crash resounding as it smashed into the ground, and grinned hysterically.

"I got something!" Sho screamed excitedly, eagerly looking around for someone that had perhaps witnessed his feat. "Did any of you hectopascals see that?!"

"Shut up, Sho!" a few Vikings yelled, already used to the man's insane vocabulary and not in the mood to deal with his turbulent emotions during a raid.

Sho ignored the grouped reprimand, eagerly running toward the forest to acquire his catch before it could manage to break free of its binds.

* * *

><p>Riku and Sora exited the dragon arena, Riku making sure to keep the door thrown wide open behind them to make the believable appearance that a dragon had burst out of it, adding a bit of ash and dust to make it look as if a dragon's fire had struck the metal.<p>

They had just finished freeing one of the dragons, the Gronckle, using the raid as an opportunity to slip to the arena unseen and complete their work. Riku and Sora had been freeing dragons for a while, usually completing the job during the night or during raids. They freed dragons intermittently and at random amounts to make sure no one recognized a pattern.

They both glanced up at the black sky when there was a faint roar and Sora's eyes widened at the sight of the faint black outline tumbling into the forest ringing the outer edge of the village.

"Van!" he screamed desperately.

* * *

><p>End of Chapter 1! :) Know how many words this was without the author's note? Probably about 5,000 something; I updated it so I'm not entirely certain. Pretty good, eh? I think if I keep every chapter at about that length, this story will be huge by the time it's finished.

Anyway, that's it for now. :3 See you next time.

Please Read and Review. :D

2. Dawn of the Fury

Chapter 2- Dawn of the Fury

**Ah, finally! Chapter 2! I bet you're all thinking that, right? Well sorry for the late update; I've been trying to focus on my original more than Fanfic but I decided I could do this and my original :3

>

Anyway, thanks to Animesaki for helping me out as my co-author/beta person xD Also she gets credit for the 'number crunching butt munch' thing.

I don't own HTTYD, TWEWY, or KH):

Please Read and Review. :)

* * *

><p>Sora and Riku sprinted through the forest as fast as their legs would carry them, determined to reach where the dragon had fallen before Sho did.<p>

_Van, Van, Van. _Sora's mind chanted, keeping up with Riku even as the underbrush attempted to tangle around his feet and trip him up.

The brunette wouldn't be able to live with himself if something happened to Van.

Riku paused at the top of a steep slope, spotting Sho down below, tightening a rope around the broad mouth of a medium-sized sleek black dragon that was snared in his bola contraption.

When he saw Sora try to bolt past him, Riku quickly grabbed his arm, dragging him behind a nearby tree to prevent the brunette from making a fool of himself or worse, hurting himself.

Riku placed a hand over Sora's mouth when he made to protest, muttering soothing words under his breath in an attempt to calm the brunette and cause him to think rationally.

They couldn't rush headlong into this sort of situation. If Sho figured out what they didâ€”what they have been doingâ€”everything would be ruined.

Riku glanced around the trunk of the tree, watching Sho start to drag the struggling dragon back toward the village, the two wing flaps on its powerful tail slapping the ground as a low growl resounded from its throat, furiously shaking its head from side to side in an attempt to throw off the rope muzzling its mouth.

He frowned before releasing Sora and motioning for the brunette to follow him; they had to get back to the village before someone noticed their absence and mentioned it to someone else or worse, told Xehanort.

Sora glanced in the direction Sho had gone helplessly, obviously wanting to go after him directly to free the dragon, but Riku grabbed his wrist gently before the brunette could get any ideas.

"We'll get him. Don't worry. But we can't help him if we're discoveredâ€”we won't be able to help others if we're discovered."

Riku spoke softly, hoping he could appeal to the brunette's rare sense of correct judgment.

Sora remained quiet for a while before reluctantly nodding, slowly following Riku back to the village.

* * *

><p>Sora and Riku quietly merged with the small crowd gathered at the entrance to the dragon training pit, several Vikings murmuring amongst themselves as Sho dragged the still struggling dragon toward the enclosure.<p>

Xehanort stood amid the mass of Vikings, watching passively as the ebony reptile was hauled past him before he turned and ambled back to his house, resting his arms behind his back.

Once he had gotten farther away from the crowd of Vikings, a measured smile crossed his face.

He finally had his Night Fury.

Xehanort entered his house as the Vikings below began to disperse, shutting the door behind him before he grabbed a thick book from the bookshelf closest to his desk and set it on the smooth desktop.

Sitting at the desk, he opened the book to reveal several hollowed out pages which contained a small glass vial with red liquid.

Xehanort picked up the phial, shaking it slightly as he looked at the minimal amount of liquid swishing around.

He frowned, setting the bottle back into the hollowed-out book and shutting it.

There was only about a months' worth left.

* * *

><p>"Thatâ€"that number crunching butt munch!"<p>

Kariya's brown eyes watched the thirty-five-year-old male pace around the small workshop from where he sat at a workbench.

Cid had always had a way with words when he was worked up.

The seventeen-year-old had just passed by the inventor's shop to pick up Sho only to come across Cid in mid-rant; after he had dragged Kariya into the shop, the inventor then continued to rant to Kariya about his 'irresponsible boyfriend'.

"I oughta shove my spear up his ass for being a foolishâ€"fool!"

Cid gave a frustrated growl, furiously rubbing his leather gloved hands through his short blond hair in exasperation.

Kariya sighed, resting his chin in his hand as he continued to politely listen to the inventor's rants, knowing that even if he did speak up to defend Sho's actions Cid wouldn't listen to him.

Cid took a brief break from his tirade, rubbing his facial stubble before tying a thin jacket around the waist of his green slacks and plopping down on a bench to irately tinker with something, blue eyes hard.

Well, Kariya supposed, tinkering with something was better than drowning his rage in mead; the blond was even worse when he was drunk.

Kariya stretched out his legs before running a hand through his orange hair, held up by four x-shaped metal pieces, before he stood up and brushed off his brown trousers, the long cross-shaped chain links hanging at his side jingling from the movement.

Maybe he could leave before Cid regained steam.

"Thank you for the hospitality, Cid, but Iâ€"

"I can' believe that idjit!" Cid stood up abruptly, the container holding several charcoal pencils toppling over when he slammed his hands on the small table, the frail silver necklace around his neck swaying with the action.

Kariya slowly sat back down, pushing a pair of orange-tinted glasses up his nose, realizing Cid wouldn't allow him to leave in the middle of a rant.

"Next time he does that I'll let him become dragon fodder. See if'n he does that again!"

"Hectopascal, guess what I added to the dragon containment unit!"

Sho entered the workshop, looking utterly proud of himself only to pale when he spotted Cid glowering at him.

Before Sho could even say anything, Cid had already cornered him, grabbing his nearby spear and pointing the sharp tip at the silver-haired teen.

"Got anything t' say fer yourself, boy?"

Sho remained quiet for several seconds, gauging whether one answer would be worse than another before he responded, "I added a Night Fury."

Cid narrowed his sky blue eyes, even though he was impressed by the teen's honesty, before pointing his lance at a nearby table.

"Git back to work, idjit."

"Positive." Sho replied, immediately heading toward the bench before Cid could change his mind and whack him with the spear.

* * *

><p>Several days later, Reiku's dragon training class had their first chance to test their skills against a dragon. The four Vikings each held a bucket containing water at Zack's request. Sora and Ventus looked excited to test their skills while Riku stared determinedly at the door containing the dragon they were going to train against; Reiku wasn't so sure about training against a dragon like the other three.<p>

"For today's lesson, you're up against a Hideous Zippleback." Zack

explained, standing on the high ground outside the arena, hand on the lock to the Zippleback's cage door. "Try to figure out which head lights the other head's flammable gas."

Reiku stood next to Riku, clutching the bucket of water to his chest as Zack released the cage door's latch.

The double doors burst open as the dragon slammed into them and green smoke poured out from the enclosure, quickly enveloping the arena and limiting the Vikings' sight.

Reiku looked around frantically, searching for the stealthy double-headed dragon, realizing he had also lost track of Riku in the dense smog.

There was a low growl nearby and Reiku froze as two long, serpentine necks appeared on either side of him, red spikes along the backs of the dragon's split necks vibrating slightly.

The Zippleback slowly ambled closer to Reiku on its short legs, bottle green body blending in with the green fumes, the red highlights along its body and cream underbelly the only thing distinguishing the medium-sized dragon from the mist.

The dragon lifted up their heads to their full height, split tail curling up behind it, and stared down at the young Viking.

Reiku trembled as the Zippleback's twin heads gazed at him before the left head began to sharply click its short upper teeth against its long lower teeth, creating sparks from the friction.

Zack looked around, leaning against the arena's roof as he searched for any sign of the dragon or the fledgling Vikings.

He noticed a frozen Reiku standing in the center of the arena and staring at the Zippleback, sparks flying from the reptile's mouth.

"Throw the water on the head!" Zack shouted, grabbing the metal railing and leaning on it. "Reiku, throw the water!"

Reiku blinked at the order, temporarily forgetting his fear, and quickly tossed the water at the sparking head only to miss when the Zippleback sharply pulled back to avoid the liquid.

The dragon stared down at the wet ground where the water had landed before both heads glanced at each other then snickered, turning back to the terrified Reiku.

"Reiku!"

Just as the other head opened its mouth, green gas building at the back of its throat, both heads looked surprised when the head that was creating the sparks suddenly became drenched.

"Good shot, Riku!" Zack called.

Both heads looked up to see Riku hanging upside down from a metal rung of the enclosure's domed roof, holding the empty bucket in both hands.

The dragon hissed at the silverette, flaring and vibrating the short wings folded against its side as Riku dropped the bucket to the ground below.

Riku let go of the rung, flipping over and dropping onto the drenched head, grabbing the straight horns protruding from the dragon's skull.

He sharply twisted the horns to the side, using his strength to drag the head to the ground until its nose horn touched the floor.

The Zippleback lost its balance with one head pressed to the ground, claws on its right legs desperately scratching at the ground as it attempted to maintain equilibrium, only to end up crashing onto its side with a low rumble, the collapse subsequently bringing the dragon's twin head down as well.

Riku smirked at the toppled dragon, breathing heavily as he kept his strong hold on the dragon's horns. Well, that wasn't so hard.

The Zippleback growled, throwing Riku off with a swift shake of its head and sending the silver-haired teen skidding across the floor, climbing back to its feet with snarl.

The dragon took several steps forward then shrieked when it spotted Zack holding up a black and yellow striped eel, both of the dragon's heads practically pressing against its back to keep from touching the poisonous fish as it backed up with the black-haired Viking slowly stepping forward.

Zack guided the dragon back to its cage using its fear of the eel, shutting the door once the Zippleback was inside and locking the cage door.

"Good job, everyone." Zack praised, turning to the others as he properly disposed of the now useless eel. "Next class, I'll explain what we'll be studying."

Reiku followed after Riku and the other two as they started to leave only to stop when a hand was placed on his shoulder.

"Hey, Rei." Zack said. "If you don't mind, would you clean the arena real fast?"

"Oh. Sure. I can do that."

"Thanks." Zack grinned, patting Reiku's shoulder as he strode past him.

Reiku started straightening the arena, pausing when he heard Zack say, "And, hey, good work out there today."

Reiku stared after Zack before he smiled to himself, continuing to work.

He actually felt pretty good about himself; it was the first time he had come out of his fear of dragons. Maybe he could manage to get over his fear someday.

Reiku startled when someone suddenly grabbed both of his shoulders, becoming alarmed when he noticed that it was Rai who had grabbed him.

"Well, well, if it isn't my favorite scaredy Viking." Seifer laughed as he came up to Reiku with Fuu strolling past him. "Cleaning up all by your lonesome today?"

"Let me go, Seifer." Reiku said, trying to sound braver than he felt.

It wasn't like he could fight back against Seifer or his gang; they not only outnumbered him, but they were stronger than he was.

"Mmâ€|nah." Seifer snapped his fingers and Rai started to drag Reiku to the nearest cage where Fuu already had her hand on the lock.

Reiku started to struggle, but Rai was bigger and stronger than he was, keeping a firm grip on the silverette's shoulders.

"Riku!"

"That goody-goody isn't going to come save you." Seifer growled as Fuu unlocked and opened the cage door slightly.

Just as quickly as Fuu had opened the gate, Reiku was shoved into the closure and the door was slammed shut behind him, plunging him in darkness.

Seifer laughed as Fuu locked the door, high-fiving her and Rai before the trio headed out of the arena.

"Yggdrasil doesn't need wimps like you!" Seifer called back.

"Yeah, you give Vikings a bad name, you know!" Rai shouted.

"Affirmative." Fuu agreed.

Reiku desperately banged on the door and rattled it, hoping someone would hear him and come get him out, blood rushing to his ears and tightening his throat until he felt like he was going to be sick from terror.

Reiku froze when he heard a soft growl, instantly turning around and pressing his back against the gate as a pair of glowing pale gold eyes opened up in the darkness, staring straight at him.

There was a faint snort before Reiku heard sniffing as the eyes slowly came toward him.

Reiku banged on the door with his fist again, keeping his back against it as his heart threatened to burst out his chest; turning his back to a dragon was not a wise idea.

"Riku!"

A purple flash of light briefly lit up the enclosure as the dragon released a blast of plasma energy at the ground, creating a very faint fire from the shot.

The Night Fury was couched low in an almost cautious gesture, short neck scrunched up, left flank exposed as it gazed at the young Viking curiously.

It used its front leg to scratch at the right side of its jaw where two stubby appendages jutted as if feigning disinterest in the teen trembling before it, but Reiku knew that acting disinterested really meant that the dragon was interested in the potential prey.

Gradually, the dragon took a step forward, the large main pair of its bat-like wings folded against its sleek back as it sniffed the air again, lifting its head a bit to better take in Reiku's scent.

Reiku lowered himself slightly, on the verge of hyperventilating at the sight of the approaching dragon; he was hoping that by sinking himself down a bit, he would make himself appear smaller and less of a threat.

Or at the very least, less appealing.

He knew that whatever he did wouldn't matter though as dragons always went for the kill.

Reiku yelped when the door suddenly disappeared from his back and he was instantly yanked from the cage, the gate closing until it remained open a crack as a brunette slipped into the enclosure.

"Are you okay, Rei?!" Riku questioned frantically, holding Reiku close as Reiku immediately clung to him with a choked sob.

Sora exited the cage, quietly shutting the door behind him and locking it.

As Riku soothed his distressed brother he glanced at Sora, silently asking something.

The brunette nodded.

* * *

><p>Riku furiously stormed into the mess hall hours later after he had finally managed to console Reiku, searching for the miserable maggot known as Seifer Almsay.<p>

His eyes narrowed when he spotted the blond sitting at a far table with Rai and Fuu, laughing and joking around with his cohorts.

"Oi, Seifer!"

Seifer looked up when he heard his name and smirked at the approaching Riku, setting down his cup of buttermilk.

"Hey, Dawn. How's your widdle brother doing?"

Before Seifer could continue talking, Riku struck the cocky blond

across the face with a right hook, knocking him out of his seat.

Rai and Fuu instantly went to their leader's side, standing slightly in front of the blond to defend him from the furious silverette.

Riku pointed at the stunned Seifer, growling, "How dare you stick my brother into a dragon's cage! I oughta feed you to a Monstrous Nightmare for what you did to him!"

Seifer scowled, standing up and wiping the blood off his lip. "Hey! It ain't my fault the wimp is scared of dragons!"

"Yeah, not his fault, you know!" Rai put in.

"Affirmative." Fuu said.

Riku scowled at the defense, jabbing Seifer's chest as he drew himself up to his full height. "You try something like that again and I won't go so easy on you."

With a final glare at Seifer, Riku turned on his heel and strode off, deciding it was better to drop his anger toward the bully and focus his attention more on protecting Reiku.

Seifer growled, clenching his fists as he watched the retreating silverette, before suddenly lunging forward and wrapping his left arm around Riku's neck, yanking him back.

When his back hit Seifer's chest, Riku instantly kicked his foot back to strike Seifer's leg, forcing the blond to let go of him with a surprised yell.

Riku immediately turned around once he was free and tackled Seifer to the floor.

Fuu and Rai uncertainly stood nearby as the two started to punch and try to get the upper hand over each other, not sure whether they should help Seifer or let him deal with Riku on his own.

A few Vikings that had been in the mess hall when the fight had started began watching the escalating battle and started rooting for either Riku or Seifer to win the scuffle.

"What is going on here?"

The noise instantly died down and the small crowd parted, several Vikings managing to look ashamed, as Xehanort approached.

Riku quickly shoved Seifer away, panting as he sat up and swiped his arm across his mouth.

Seifer growled at Riku, glaring at him as he straightened his hat, but made no move to attack again in Xehanort's presence.

Xehanort gazed at the two disheveled boys silently for several seconds before tilting his head slightly.

"To my hut, boys."

* * *

><p>After a bit of deliberation once he had heard the two different stories about what had happened to cause the fight, Xehanort decided to punish Seifer by having him shear the sheep before the next trading ship came in; Yggdrasil exported wool to the trader that came every three months in exchange for other goods the merchant had. It was an easy exchange and allowed the village to obtain items that they couldn't grow or get on their own.<p>

Xehanort's punishment for Riku was having him milk the goats and make half the milk into cheese and the rest into buttermilk.

Seifer didn't look entirely happy about his punishment but reluctantly nodded after a mild glare at the silverette next to him.

Once he had been dismissed, Riku headed toward Sora's house so he could talk to the brunette before they made their way to the dragon arena to free some dragons.

* * *

><p>Reiku woke up when he felt that something was off.<p>

The past day had been strangely peaceful; there were no nightmares, no dragon raids, and Seifer's group had left him alone.

They glared at him from a distance, but never approached, even when he was by himself.

Reiku was certain it had been the Elder who had ordered the trio to leave him alone and he couldn't be more grateful to Xehanort; Seifer's gang not bothering him gave Reiku one less thing to worry about.

The teen got out of bed, padding toward Riku's room and peeking inside.

His brother's bed was empty, the sheets still neatly made and revealing that Riku hadn't even slept in his bed last night.

Reiku frowned slightly, heading downstairs.

Where would Riku have gone in the minutes before dawn?

When he didn't spot Riku in the kitchen, Reiku trotted outside to continue his search, shivering in the chilly pre-dawn air.

Reiku knew he probably should have quickly changed into proper clothes before heading outside, but Reiku was concerned as to where his brother had gone.

This wasn't like Riku to leave before he woke up.

He quietly searched for his brother, wondering if Riku had gone out early to meet up with Sora for some reason, but if he had Riku would have mentioned it to Reiku so he wouldn't worry.

Reiku wandered through the silent village as he looked for Riku, the

dew-damp grass wetting his bare feet.

Where could his brother have gone at this time?

The silverette paused when he heard a noise and looked toward where the sound had come from, gazing toward Sora's house.

"Riku?"

Reiku headed toward the sound, the hair on the back of his neck and along his arms standing on end, though he wasn't sure if it was from the cold or anxiety.

He heard the noise again and realized it couldn't have been caused by his brother; it sounded more animal-like than human.

Reiku instantly froze when he saw the body of a Night Fury crouched by the side of Sora's house, its head stuck in a basket of pickled fish, snorts and swallowing noises coming from the woven container.

Reiku took a step back, the dragon instantly lifting its head from the basket when it heard the subtle movement, thick mobile ear plates raised and twitching as the Night Fury licked its teeth and lips.

When the dragon glanced in his direction, Reiku instantly bolted to the nearest building, the black reptile watching him for several seconds before bounding after him.

Reiku yelped when he was tackled to the ground, the Night Fury pinning him down by his shoulders with its powerful front legs.

The Fury rumbled quietly, glaring at the frightened Viking before raising its wings in a threatening gesture as it opened its mouth.

Reiku trembled and closed his eyes, waiting for the dragon to blast his head off.

A loud snarl sounded directly in his ear before the pressure on his shoulders was suddenly gone.

Cautiously, Reiku opened his eyes, seeing no Night Fury standing above him, and shakily sat up to look around.

He saw someone running toward the nearby forest, noticing that the boy appeared to be around his age with spiky black hair and pale skin.

A roar sounded in the distance and the naked boy returned the call as huge black wings spread from his back, lifting him into the air.

Reiku stared dumbly after the strange winged boy, half of his mind wondering where in Valhalla the Night Fury had disappeared to and the other half questioning who the boy was and where he had come from.

* * *

><p>And end Chapter 2 xD I hope you all can't wait for the next chapter. Though really only Anime is reading this, but I'm still grateful either way.

She puts up with my insanity and crazy ideas xD

Anyway, remember to Read and Review.

See y'all next chapter~! :D

3. Hitsuzen

Chapter 3-Hitsuzen

"A naturally foreordained event. A state in which other outcomes are impossible. A result which can only be obtained by a single causality, and all other causalities would necessarily create different results. So reads the Kodansha Japanese desk dictionary, second edition." - Yuko Ichihara, xxxHolic

**I decided Hitsuzen would be a good title for this chapter cause you know. Yeah. Sometimes I suck at titles. -->

Anyway, I don't have much to say except continued thanks toward Animesaki for reading through the rough drafts I send her and helping me with the chapters xD

I don't own HTTYD or anything else):

Please Read and Review. :D

* * *

><p>Xehanort paused in his writing when he noticed that his hands were thinner than normal with a few blue veins standing out against his tan skin.<p>

He hummed to himself as he opened and closed his hand before pushing his chair back and standing up, going over to the bookshelf beside his desk and pulling out a thick plain covered book.

Xehanort opened the book and carefully took out the small vial from the carved-out portion of the pages, shaking it slightly as he gazed at the red liquid swishing around, his reflection staring back at him.

The Elder noticed that he looked slightly older, more tired, with wrinkles starting to appear around his mouth and eyes.

Uncorking the vial, Xehanort opened his mouth and tilted the bottle, dropping a single bead of the liquid on his tongue.

Almost instantly, the wrinkles faded and a faint light overtook the tired one in his golden eyes.

He smiled at the rapid rejuvenation, corking the bottle and shaking it again.

A knock sounded at his door and Xehanort turned slightly, irritated at being interrupted.

"Come in," he commanded, setting the vial back into the hollowed-out book and shutting it.

A nervous Viking slowly opened the door and hesitantly came inside as Xehanort slipped the book back onto the shelf.

"Elder Xehanort, I have some news to bear."

"What?" Xehanort almost snapped, heading back to his desk to resume his work.

The Viking fidgeted timidly, hesitating in his answer. "W-well, this morning, we discovered that two dragons escapedâ€|"

"Which two?" the Elder responded automatically, already used to the news of dragons somehow escaping their pens.

"A Zippleback and theâ€|the Night Fury."

Xehanort paused, one hand resting on the edge of the desk.

"What?" he questioned in a low growl, slowly glancing at the faintly trembling Viking.

The Night Fury was _gone_?

He just barely resisted the urge to slam a fist on the desk; he had been so close! And now he was back to square one.

"Gather the town! We're going to have a meeting about this."

The Viking hastily bowed. "Yes, Elder Xehanort."

* * *

><p>In minutes, the entire town had gathered in the mess hall for the meeting; the older Vikings stood near the front while the younger ones were near the back.<p>

As not only Elder but Chief, Xehanort stood at the front of the assembly where everyone could easily see and hear him.

He gazed at the crowd before him, golden eyes scanning to make sure that absolutely everyone was there, before he hummed to himself and straightened slightly, resting his arms behind his back.

Almost immediately the crowd quieted and turned their attention to the Elder.

"I have called you here today to talk about the dragons somehow managing to break free of their enclosures." Xehanort announced.

Sora and Riku glanced at each other nervously, wondering if their mission had somehow been discovered.

"I don't know how they are doing it," Xehanort continued, "but until

it is revealed, I want Terra and Ventus to watch the pen one day and Xaldin and Lexaeus to watch the other day. Both teams will switch off every other day."

Ventus bounced excitedly on the front of his feet, azure eyes lighting up.

He got to hang out with Terra!

The blond glanced to his right where a tall male two years older than him leaned against a nearby wall with his arms folded across his chest.

Terra was Leon's younger brother by four years with brown hair reaching to the base of his neck, the locks styled into rather messy vertical spikes with bangs framing his face. He and Leon looked a lot alike that if it weren't for the scar on Leon's forehead, the villagers would probably get confused.

Terra sensed Ventus's gaze and his blue eyes turned toward the blonde.

The brunet smiled faintly when Ventus excitedly waved at him, raising a hand and giving a faint wave in response.

Roxas, who stood beside his twin, noticed the exchange and rolled his eyes as he gave a disgusted scoff, Ventus elbowing him in response to his rude gesture.

Roxas may have liked hanging out with Leon, but he didn't like Terra with his beige slacks and black, high-collared tunic that clung a bit too tightly to his chest—which Roxas was certain that Terra did on purpose because the brunet knew Ventus had a crush on him.

Roxas just didn't think his twin should like someone so vain.

Lexaeus the Earth-Splitter quietly stood next to Xaldin the Whirlwind, both of them adopting the same stance with arms crossed and eyes sternly staring straight ahead.

Lexaeus was the village blacksmith and was a very powerful Viking with angular, strong features to match.

His ginger hair was slicked back into odd, messy spikes and small eyebrows rested above his deep blue eyes.

He was a quiet man, like his assistant, but had profound, deep thoughts.

He worked well with Xaldin in the shop and with Cid when bringing one of the inventor's creations to life.

With broad shoulders, Xaldin handled most of the sharpening of weapons and stoking fire in the blacksmith shop while Lexaeus mostly worked with pounding the hot metal into weapons.

Xaldin's black hair, styled into dreadlocks, was kept out of the way with one of the dreadlocks used to hold the rest back into a ponytail, leaving four thin dreadlocks to hang in front of his

face.

With thick sideburns and hard violet eyes, Xaldin was seen as intimidating by several Vikings, especially with how he easily wielded the six lances he used to hunt and kill dragons.

However, Xaldin was probably the gentlest Viking in the village, being seen picking flowers and giving them to young Vikings.

As Xehanort continued to talk, switching the topic from the escaped dragons to the trading ship arriving to Yggdrasil soon, Reiku wandered over to Cloud who stood slightly close to Leon.

"Cloud?"

Cloud glanced at Reiku and blinked.

"Hey."

"Can I talk to you?"

Cloud glanced back at Leon, noticing with disappointment that the brunet had slipped off without him noticing, and he sighed with a shrug.

"Sure."

Reiku glanced around quickly, making sure that no one was close enough to hear them, before he said, "I think I saw something strange."

"Strange?" Cloud repeated, raising an eyebrow as he leaned against the wall behind him and folded his arms across his chest.

Reiku nodded earnestly. "Yeah."

"How so?"

"Wellâ€¦" Reiku shifted nervously as he glanced at the ground, fiddling with his fingers.

Would Cloud even believe him? Or would the blond just think that he was insane?

Reiku took a breath as he steadied himself.

"I thinkâ€¦I saw a flying human."

Cloud looked mildly surprised as his other eyebrow raised to meet the first.

"Flyingâ€¦human?" the blond repeated slowly, but thankfully Reiku didn't hear a hint of skepticism in his voice.

"And a dragon tackled me but didn't kill me." Reiku explained quickly, hoping that Cloud had some sort of answer to what had happened to him. "I thought dragons always went for the kill."

Cloud remained silent for several seconds before he finally asked,

"What sort of dragon?"

"Night Fury."

Cloud returned to his muteness as he pondered what Reiku had just told him.

Cloud was an observer by nature so he knew a lot of things and that included why a Night Fury wouldn't kill what it attacked.

He also knew what Sora and Riku did during the night on differing days, but he hadn't mentioned anything to them because he didn't want them to think he would blackmail them in order to keep their secret.

"Cloud?"

Cloud blinked as he remembered that Reiku was expecting some sort of answer to his questions and coughed slightly as he tried to think of something.

Finally he shook his head slowly as he replied, "I'm not sure why that happened."

Reiku frowned slightly as he looked at the ground, looking disappointed.

"Sorry, Reiku."

Reiku shrugged, glancing to the side. "It's okay, I guess."

Cloud decided that it was time to change the subject to something else.

"Hey. How are you doing in training?"

"Okay, I guess."

"No bites or scratches?"

"Nope."

Cloud ruffled Reiku's hair, smiling faintly.

"Good for you."

Reiku slowly returned the smile, smoothing his hair down as he faintly heard Xehanort dismiss the meeting in the background.

"Thanks for the advice, Cloud."

Cloud blinked, not quite sure what sort of advice he had given to the silveret as he watched Reiku walk away, mentioning something about gathering firewood.

* * *

><p>Kariya huffed to himself as he made his way to the dragon pen, not entirely thrilled with having dragon training directly after an

extremely boring town meeting.<p>

It wasn't that he didn't find the dragon training interesting, but he just didn't like hanging out with Hayner and the two others in his little groupâ€”Pence and Olette.

Hayner was around eighteen and a bit obnoxious, usually trying to act tougher than he really was. He had light skin and spiky, blond hair with dark eyebrows. He wore baggy trousers mixed with the colors of green and brown (to which he claimed was to help him blend in and avoid dragon attacks) and a short, sleeveless grey vest over a black muscle shirt decorated with a white, crudely-drawn dragon skull and crossbones that Hayner had stitched into the shirt himself.

Supposedly he and Seifer were dating, but it hadn't been proven as so far all the two did was argue and push each other around with Seifer usually coming out on top.

Pence was the second member of Hayner's group and was rather heavy-set with light skin and black hair held up by a black strip of cloth with grey lining.

Pence wore blue trousers and a short-sleeved white shirt underneath a red sleeveless tunic with a black silhouette of a skeletal Terrible Terror on the front, three fish bones hovering above the tiny dragon.

Pence was the humorous one of the group and was very intellectual with dragons and their weaknesses and even their shot limits.

Olette was not only the tomboy in the group, but acted like a mother to the two, making sure that they didn't get into trouble as the two had a habit of attracting it; Hayner however was the one who had the stronger polarity in inviting trouble while Pence was an unwitting accomplice.

Olette had soft peach-colored skin and brown hair that stuck out on the sides with two strands of hair falling from either side of her head, just long enough to drape over her shoulders. Out of all the Vikings, she wore the lightest clothes that consisted of an orange shirt with string-like sleeves and a white floral design at the bottom and had on short, khaki-colored slacks.

As he entered the pen, Kariya noticed that Hayner and the other two were already there.

Pence was trying to figure out what dragon Zack was going to have them train against while Hayner was claiming he didn't care about the size of the dragon he would still kick its hide, mud brown eyes bright as he started swiping at the air with an imaginary sword.

Olette sighed, shaking her head as she rolled bright green eyes, playing with the beaded, sky blue bracelet on her right wrist, obviously quite used to the duo's behavior.

Kariya rolled his eyes as he stood beside the three, deciding that they wouldn't last long in training and even if they somehow did, they wouldn't last long as Vikings if they didn't get rid of their

childlike innocence.

Training against the dragons and learning their weaknessesâ€”how to kill them without being killedâ€”was not a game.

"Okay, guys." Zack said as he came into the pen, closing the gated door behind him before stepping in front of the small group. "Today, we'll be training against the most feared dragon Vikings know."

"Oooh, ooh!" Hayner waved his hand excitedly. "Monstrous Nightmare?!"

"No."

"The Deadly Nadder!" Pence put in, excitedly pulling at the piece of purple cloth tied around his neck as his deep brown eyes lit up.

"No!" Zack whined, obviously frustrated at being continuously interrupted. "The Terrible Terror!"

"I think it's cute." Olette sighed, rolling a spherical, sky blue charm hanging from a black string around her neck between her fingers.

Kariya just barely managed not to face palm at Olette's declaration of a Terrible Terror being 'cute'.

He was surrounded by idiots.

"It's not as cute up close." Zack said as he stood by the dragon's door and opened it.

Gradually, a small green dragon crept out of the small enclosure, head low to the ground.

The Terrible Terror had a springy, iguana-like body with a pair of small spiraled horns, a pair of short wings, and a tail with a barbed tip.

"Aww!" Olette said as the Terrible Terror tilted its head and stared at the four young Vikings curiously, blinking its large yellow eyes dumbly.

"I heard that with its physical attributesâ€”such as the type of horn and spinal ridgeâ€”suggest that, despite the difference in size, the Terrible Terror is closely related to the Monstrous Nightmare." Pence put in.

"I bet it ain't so tough!" Hayner said proudly, puffing up his chest as he bravely approached the tiny dragon.

The Terrible Terror immediately narrowed its eyes at the approaching Viking, giving a low hiss at Hayner as it arched its back and lowered its wings.

Before Hayner could even react, the dragon leaped up and landed on his head, causing Hayner to shriek and immediately start swatting at it in an attempt to get it off.

The Terror innocently hopped down from the frantic Viking's head, turning around and setting Hayner's pants on fire with a direct blast of flames.

Kariya watched indifferently as the teen ran around the enclosure, screaming, with the other two teens chasing after him in an attempt to get Hayner to stop running so they could put out the flames.

The Terrible Terror scratched its head with a hind leg before giving a squeaky yawn as it watched the three Vikings.

Zack face palmed at the ensuing scene before him.

* * *

><p>"Ow!" Hayner yelped as Seifer rubbed some burn salve onto his wounded lower back.<p>

Hayner had just arrived at Seifer's house, muttering something about a stupid dragon being a pain in his ass before flopping on the older blond's bed and demanding burn salve which had frankly surprised Seifer at Hayner's brazen request. Lucky for Hayner the burns were very light and would probably heal within a week or so.

"That will teach you to mess with a dragon, no matter the size, doofus." Seifer snorted, getting more burn salve. "Now hold still so I can get your butt."

"You just love touching my assâ€|" Hayner grumbled, resting his chin on his folded arms as he pouted at the wall.

"You have a nice ass." Seifer responded casually as he put small bandages over the areas where he had applied the salve.

"Shut up."

* * *

><p>Reiku entered the forest at the edge of the village, looking for good branches or twigs to use for the fireplace.<p>

He knew there were usually good logs near the middle of the woods where the majority of dead and fallen trees were so that was where he was headed.

Reiku paused close to the forest's center when he noticed someone standing near an opening and blinked, noticing that the person was wearing thin clothing that appeared to be made from some sort of skin, like sheep skin.

Who was that? They definitely weren't from Yggdrasil since Reiku hadn't seen them before and everyone in the village knew each other. A lost traveler maybe? He definitely looked foreign.

Cautiously, Reiku went closer to the person, noticing that they were slightly taller than him and had black hair.

The boy suddenly lifted his head as he appeared to hear Reiku's approach and slowly turned around, gold eyes curious.

Reiku stopped as he stared at the boy, noticing that he looked a lot like Sora but Reiku was certain he would have remembered the brunet mentioning he had a twin.

Reiku hesitated before speaking up, taking another step closer. "Who are you? Are you lost?"

The Sora look-alike blinked at Reiku, tilting his head.

Gradually, he began to head closer to Reiku who immediately backed up at the sudden approach.

However the boy was faster than he appeared and was immediately standing inches from Reiku's face, nose twitching.

The boy was so close that Reiku could smell his natural scent; he smelled like rain and lightning as if he just come from a place that had been storming.

The black-haired boy gave a small growl, noticing that Reiku smelled a bit like flowers and darkness, before abruptly putting his hands against Reiku's back.

Reiku instantly froze at the sensation of the teen practically feeling him up, the boy's hands almost seeming to search for something.

The strange boy released another small growl, looking confused as he let go of Reiku and stepped back slightly.

When the boy's hands withdrew, Reiku immediately scrambled backward, heart pounding as the boy relentlessly followed him.

Reiku gasped when his back hit the rough bark of a tree and pressed himself as far back as he could against the tree as the black-haired teen continued to approach.

Apparently unconcerned about personal boundaries, the boy stepped closer to Reiku until they were practically touching, curiously sniffing at him.

Suddenly his hand was grabbed and Reiku blushed as the strange boy sniffed the palm of his hand.

What. The. Hel.

What in Thor's name was this boy doing?

Seconds later, Reiku's hand was dropped and the boy held out his hand toward Reiku, looking expectant.

Reiku looked from the boy to the outstretched hand, not entirely sure what the whole hand-sniffing thing was about.

Cautiously, Reiku leaned closer and gave the boy's hand a single sniff before rapidly pulling back as if afraid he'd be struck.

That appeared to be what the boy wanted, however, as he smiled then looked up when a roar sounded from somewhere nearby.

The boy returned the roar before turning his back to Reiku and running off, black wings spreading from his shoulder blades and lifting him off the ground.

Reiku stared at the disappearing boy, dumbfounded.

Had he really just seen that?

Slowly removing himself from the tree, Reiku stumbled home, completely forgetting about the firewood.

* * *

><p>"Hey, Rei," Riku greeted when the front door opened and Reiku stumbled in.<p>

"Hey, Rei!" Sora chirped, kicking his legs back and forth as he sat at the table.

Reiku barely responded to the duo, giving a faint wave in their direction as he headed upstairs.

Sora frowned at the strange reaction and gave Riku a puzzled look, wondering what was wrong with Reiku.

They both knew how Reiku typically acted and this was a bit out of his personality.

Riku, however, was grinning a bit.

Noticing the brunet's confusion, Riku decided to elaborate a bit.

"I think he found a crush."

Sora blinked at the silveret's statement, even more confused. How could Riku tell that his brother had a crush?

"Huh?"

Riku sighed. "He was blushing, Sora."

Sora gasped eagerly, grabbing the edge of the table and leaning forward.

"You mean he might have found a girlfriend?!"

"Or a boyfriend." Riku pointed out.

"Awww!" Sora cooed.

"Waitâ€|" Riku muttered as he realized something. "Who could it be?"

Sora looked at Riku, puzzled.

"Practically everyone in the village is taken." Riku explained. "Either that or they're over thirty. So it can't be someone from the village."

Sora thought about it before he perked up.

"I want to knowâ€" "

Riku rapidly grabbed Sora around the waist before he could rush upstairs to pester Reiku about his crush.

"He'll tell us when he's ready."

Sora pouted, wilting back against Riku.

"That's no funâ€|. "

"I know." Riku briefly nuzzled Sora's hair in order to placate him before letting go of the brunet's waist. "Now, come on. You can help me make dinner."

"Yay!"

* * *

><p>After he was certain that Riku had gone to sleep, Reiku quietly got out of bed and crept past his brother's room, noticing Sora snuggled against Riku the silveret's chin resting on the top of his head.<p>

Well that explained why the brunet had dinner with them.

Slipping on a pair of shoes set at the front door, Reiku quietly opened the door and slipped outside, shutting it behind him.

He then trotted toward the forest, heading down a covered path that only he knew about.

The path itself lead to a small area littered with colorful flowers every shade of the rainbow, a large flat stick sticking up from the middle of the garden with crudely drawn runes carved into its face.

The runes spelled out 'Sephiroth'.

The area was a makeshift gravesite that Reiku had made when he had been younger, shortly after Sephiroth's death.

Despite having sent out a boat containing several items that the village thought Sephiroth would need in Valhalla they were missing the crucial part of the funeral rite.

A body.

Even without it, the funeral had continued with Riku sending the first lit arrow into the air to set the boat ablaze, several other Vikings following suit.

Reiku had been too young to participate in the rite, only allowed to watch from Riku's side.

So he had made his own grave site several months later so he had a physical place to go to talk to Sephiroth.

No one knew about the place Reiku had created, not even Riku, and Reiku wanted to keep it that way.

Reiku sat several feet in front of the marker, crossing his legs.

"Hey, Dad. How are things in Valhalla? Things are okay here, I guess. Riku made me attend dragon training and we had a raid a few days ago. There's also this weird boy that has wings."

Reiku scratched his head.

"He looks like Sora, which is weird too since I know that Sora doesn't have a brother. I haven't told anyone that I've seen him except Cloud, because I trust him, but even he's not sure about what I saw."

He shrugged.

"I guess he thinks I'm crazy. I kind of think I'm crazy, too. Except the boy touched me, so I know he's real. I just don't believe it. I'm not sure what to do anymore."

Reiku sighed, looking at the stars twinkling in the black sky above him, the razor thin crescent moon nestled between the stars.

"What do you think I should do?"

He waited silently for a while, still gazing at the sky as if waiting for the stars or moon to give him an answer to his dilemma.

After a while, he sighed and lowered his head, clenching the legs of his pants between his hands.

He hadn't really expected an answer.

"You should have just let me burnâ€¦"

Reiku shuddered when he suddenly felt the threat of tears, his throat constricting, and he covered his face and started to cry.

"Everyone would be better offâ€¦I can't handle being a Vikingâ€¦"

Reiku sat by the marker for several hours, sitting in silence with only his thoughts keeping him company, until he finally fell asleep.

* * *

><p>I remember a while ago I learned that word blonde is for female's with blonde hair and blond is the male spelling. Same with brunet(te) and now I've been having to go back and make sure that I have change silverette to silveret or however it should be spelled for the male version but whatever; sorry, sometimes I'm a bit picky with how things are spelled.

Anyway, that's chapter 3 xD Hope you enjoyed.

**I'll try to get up the next chapter as soon as possible but as you

can see it takes a while for me to tweak it until I feel like it's good xD**

Please Read and Review. :3

4. Life of Strife

Chapter 4-Life of Strife

**All right, chapter 4~! Yeah! Been a bit longer than a month, but oh well.

>

Anyway, I hope you guys are enjoying this and I know not many are reviewing on it but I don't care cause I'm doing this for fun xD

Anyway, I should probably be able to update a bit more often since after this week I'm on winter vacation! :3

I don't own HTTYD or anything else xD

Please Read and Review.

* * *

><p>Cloud was awakened when the pre-morning light streamed through the shutters of his window, annoyingly managing to break through his pleasant dreams about a certain brunet farmer.<p>

The eldest Strife sat up in his bed, blinking dazedly as the sheets fell to his waist before rubbing his hands furiously through his hair in an attempt to get the spikes into some sort of tamed mess.

After getting dressed into loose black slacks and a pale blue shirt, Cloud snuck out of his room and to the twins' room near the end of the hall, making sure to stay on his tiptoes in order to avoid creating any noise.

He peeked into the room, spotting the two sleeping in the same bed with the blankets halfway thrown off and Ventus stubbornly clinging to Roxas' waist, the older twin looking annoyed at the intrusion even in his sleep, one hand unconsciously trying to push Ventus off.

Cloud had long since given up trying to keep the two in their separate beds because one way or another they both ended up in the others' bed sometime during the night and had done so ever since they had been young.

Carefully stepping into the room, making sure to avoid the squeaky floorboard close to the bed, Cloud crept toward the twins and slowly grabbed Roxas and Ventus's ankles before yanking them up.

Both boys were awakened by the movement and yelped when they were dragged from bed before being swung in a circle.

The Strife family had a daily wake-up routine that had been performed for several years with the first step involving Cloud sneaking into

the twins' room since they shared one and grabbing the boys by their ankles before swinging them around until one or both of them woke up.

"Okay, okay, we're up!" Roxas snapped, flailing around in an attempt to grab somethingâ€"anything that came within his reachâ€"while Ventus laughed.

Cloud stopped turning in a circle, causing Roxas and Ventus to knock their heads together due to the loss of motion.

Both boys groaned, holding their injured heads.

"Again with the morning concussion." Roxas grumbled, rubbing his head.

Cloud gave a soft chuckle, setting both boys in their respective beds and making sure to ruffle their hair.

"Sorry."

"And the same apology." Ventus giggled, smoothing his hair back into its windswept shape.

Cloud lightly swatted both boys on the arm, attempting to look annoyed with them.

"Get dressed. We have work to do after breakfast before the daylight breaks."

"Yes, sir!" the twins replied, mock saluting Cloud.

Cloud rolled his eyes and left the room.

* * *

><p>While Cloud cooked the eggs, Ventus and Roxas got the table set up with slices of bread, several fresh blueberries, and cups of slightly chilled buttermilk; Roxas had warm buttermilk since he didn't like cold buttermilk.<p>

Once they had finished breakfast, the twins helped Cloud rinse out the dishes and set them back in their respective places before the three brothers went outside to their garden to till and water the soil while it was still soft from the night before.

Roxas worked on preparing the earth for the seeds, dragging the hoe slowly across the soft earth in measured strokes, while Ventus planted a few cabbages seeds and distributed the fertilizer and Cloud watered the ground after the seeds and fertilizer were down.

The blond paused however when he noticed that his twin and sibling were gone, their tools left on the ground.

He glanced around, wondering where they could have gotten off to and noticed both of them leaning on the fence, staring at something a few yards away.

That something happened to be Leon and Terra, both of them working in their garden as well before the sun came up.

Terra's hair was pulled out of the way with a prickly headband with Leon's short brown hair pulled back the same way, exposing the diagonal scar cutting across Leon's forehead which was normally hidden behind his bangs.

Both brunets were shirtless, exposing their toned chests and chiseled backs, one working with a hoe while the other worked with a pick to break up any found rocks.

Roxas gave a disgusted scoff at the sight of his brothers practically drooling over the brunets, turning back to his work.

Leon paused in his work, briefly speaking to Terra about something.

After Terra's response, the elder Leonhart made his way over to the Strife's.

Immediately, Cloud and Roxas began working again, both grabbing tools other than the ones they had previously been working with, acting as if they had not just been spying on their neighbors.

"Hey, Cloud." Leon greeted as he stopped by the fence separating him from the garden, leaning a hand on one of the posts.

"O-oh, hey, Squall." Cloud greeted, half of his mind remembering that Leon liked being called Squall rather than Leon as he set the pick's handle on the ground and leaned on the top of it, trying to appear casual. "Uh, what's up?"

"Smooth," Roxas muttered as he walked passed Cloud, the older Strife distractedly batting at him to get him to shut up.

"May I borrow a shovel? We keep meaning to get one from the trader, but he's always sold out by the time Terra or I reach him."

Cloud perked up, nodding eagerly. "Y-yeah! I can totally get a pick!"

Leon looked slightly amused at the mistake as he corrected, "Shovel."

"Shovel!"

Ventus snickered at Cloud's panicked ramblings as Roxas rolled his eyes at his brother's response.

Only Leon could get Cloud to act like a goofy idiot.

"Hey." Terra said as he approached the group, Ventus immediately tensing at the other Leonhart's appearance. "You got that shovel yet?"

"Not yet." Leon responded as Ventus started to stutter as well.

Roxas glared at his useless brothers, throwing the hoe to the ground in frustration before stomping off to the small tool cabinet against the side of the house.

"I'll get the damn tool!"

* * *

><p>After the incident with the Leonharts and pulling his brothers out of their puddle of self-misery, Roxas departed for Vexen's hut while Ventus went to meet up with Riku and Sora before dragon training.<p>

Cloud left to visit Zack in order to walk him to the arena as he always did.

Zack was his friend since childhood and the two had completed dragon training together along with Sephiroth and Leon.

The dragon training instructor was dating Aerith, a gentle woman who mostly grew flowers with herbal qualities and actually rarely fought during the nights dragons raided, choosing instead to help out Vexen caring for any injured.

Aerith had light brown hair that reached to her lower back and was plaited with a light pink silk ribbon given to her by her mother.

Segmented bangs framed her face and set off her bright emerald eyes along with her usual attire of a shin-length pink dress and short red jacket that Zack had apparently given her several years ago.

After knocking on the door, Aerith answered seconds later and smiled when she noticed Cloud standing at the threshold.

"Hello, Cloud. Here to pick up Zack?"

Cloud nodded, giving a faint smile. "Of course."

Aerith motioned to the nearby staircase, moving to the side. "He's getting dressed upstairs."

Cloud thanked her and headed upstairs.

Cloud made his way to Zack's room, spotting the black-haired male standing near his bed with his back to the blond, wiggling into a shirt.

Cloud paused when he spotted the severe burn scars spreading across Zack's back and shoulders like a stain, remembering the night the wounds had occurred.

* * *

><p>"I bet I can kill a dragon way before you can!" a fifteenâyear-old Seifer said, putting his hands on his hips as he stared at Leon cockily.

"_You're on." Leon said, crossing his arms as he gazed at the blond passively. "If there's a dragon raid tonight, I'll kill a dragon before you can even blink."_

_Seifer snorted, stalking off with Rai and Fuu instantly following

after him._

"_I don't know about this," Cloud said, glancing at Leon. "Doing a bet in the middle of a fight with a dragon isn't the greatest idea, Squall."_

"_Yeah, stop trying to one-up him, Leon!" Zack agreed, putting an arm around both Leon and Cloud. "That's not what defending our village is about!"_

"_I'm going to show Seifer that I am stronger than he is." Leon grumbled, shoving Zack's arm off and walking away._

Zack and Cloud glanced at each other worriedly, fearing that Leon's competitive streak with Seifer was eventually going to end badly for one or both of them.

By the time the dragons had started their raid, Cloud was more nervous than ever, but kept his apprehension in check as he started to fight off any dragons trying to steal any livestock.

He fought off a Hideous Zippleback with his large sword; the dragon was attempting to take a sheep, though it seemed more focused on arguing with its other head on who was going to carry the sheep.

Cloud glanced over at Leon who was fighting off a Monstrous Nightmare while nearby Seifer challenged a Deadly Nadder.

The large scarlet dragon reared up its long neck with a snarl at the sword-wielding Viking before sending a large blast of flames at the brunet which was easily avoided, the fire hitting a nearby house and setting it ablaze.

Seifer snickered at the failed attack before blocking a few of the needles that were whipped at him from the Nadder's tail.

Leon got annoyed with the battle he was engaged in, running toward a nearby house and jumping up, pushing off the side and launching toward the Monstrous Nightmare.

Seifer paused in his attack, staring at Leon in surprise, the brunet clinging to two of the dragon's four twisted horns as the Monstrous Nightmare furiously shook its head in an attempt to dislodge the Viking.

The blond screamed when his forehead burst into pain, clutching it and dropping to one knee.

The Nadder snarled and raised its tail for another strike, needles lifted up.

Another Viking took the opportunity to intervene, tackling the Nadder and forcibly dragging it to the ground.

Leon became distracted by his rival's scream, glancing toward Seifer to make sure he was okay, the Monstrous Nightmare immediately shaking Leon off from its head when it sensed the brunet's hesitance.

_The tip of the dragon's horn cut across Leon's forehead, causing

Leon to let go and fall to the ground as the Monstrous Nightmare shook its head once more._

The dragon swung its head toward the fallen brunet with a snarl, raising up a clawed wing to finish the Viking off.

Leon panted as he stared up at the dragon, hand pressed to his forehead in order to stop the bleeding, but the blood and stabbing pain were blocking his vision.

There was a swift slice and the Monstrous Nightmare suddenly collapsed to the ground, its head severed from its shoulders by a clean cut.

Cloud stood by the fallen dragon, still holding his sword in attack position, before he slowly lowered it and looked at Leon.

The brunet gave a faint smile, grateful to the blond for saving his life.

Cloud returned the smile before he whirled around when he heard an awful scream resound nearby, spotting a gorgeous white dragon stalking toward a fallen Zack.

"_Zack!"_

The graceful white dragon roared as it lifted its head to the sky and flared its wings, flames from nearby fires causing its scales to glitter, before lunging its jaws toward Zack.

The dragon abruptly froze however as Sephiroth appeared by its side, long sword still held up to its shoulder, blade side pointed up.

Cloud watched as the white dragon collapsed, blood pouring from every crevice of its body, still in awe at Sephiroth's speed and grace.

Another white dragon nearby noticed its fallen partner and gave a grief-stricken roar before turning its amber gaze on Sephiroth, baring its teeth with a snarl.

The two stared at each other before the dragon departed, the rest of the dragons following after.

Cloud ran over to Zack, Vexen the medicine doctor already by the black-haired Viking and checking him over.

Cloud started to smell the burnt flesh as he came closer and saw the horrific red marks spread across Zack's entire back and top of his shoulders.

Sephiroth seemed somber as he also approached and gazed down at the doctor, questioning softly, "Will he make it?"

"_His back is extremely burned," Vexen muttered, leaning back and running a hand through his pale blond hair. "But I will see what I can do."_

_Everyone in the village feared that Zack wouldn't make it through

the night. And even if he somehow miraculously did, he would never be able to be a true Viking again._

* * *

><p>Zack turned slightly when he sensed someone staring at him and grinned when he saw Cloud standing at the threshold to his room.<p>

"Hey, Spike!"

Cloud was dragged out of his reminiscing when he heard Zack's voice and smiled weakly, trying not to show how shaken he was by the memory.

"Hey, Zack."

"Time for dragon training?"

Cloud gave a small nod. "Yeah."

"Great!" Zack grabbed Cloud's hand, pulling him downstairs. "Let's go."

Cloud sighed at Zack's eagerness, letting the dragon training teacher draw him to the front door.

"Are you leaving now?" Aerith asked, approaching the two males from the kitchen.

Zack grinned. "Yep!"

Aerith looked a bit nervous as she always did when Zack went to the dragon arena to teach. "Be careful."

Zack smiled, reaching out his hand to Aerith as he started to make his way to the front door, murmuring, "I love you more and more."

Aerith returned the gesture, lightly brushing her fingertips against Zack's.

"Don't want to let you go."

* * *

><p>The early morning sunlight was just barely beginning to peek up over the horizon when Roxas finally arrived at Vexen's hut, panting as he bolted into it; the medicine doctor had a strict guideline about the time Roxas should be there and he was several minutes late.<p>

He was late, late, late! Stupid yak.

"Sorry I'm late, Vexen!"

"You better be." Vexen grumbled, coming out from the back room, vivid green eyes narrowing at the blond.

"I'm really sorry," Roxas apologized again as he tied a black apron

around his waist. "There was a yak andâ€"

"Forget it." Vexen sighed, running a hand through his platinum blond hair, briefly displacing the two bangs framing his thin face. "At least you're here at all."

Roxas ducked his head in embarrassment as Vexen returned to the back room once more.

Seconds later, the male came back, handing Roxas a wicker basket and a sheet of paper.

"Gather those herbs and return."

Roxas stared at the basket and piece of paper before nodding eagerly. "Of course!"

Vexen hummed as the blond ran out of the hut, obviously eager to return to the doctor's good side.

Wiping his hands on the black apron resting over his pale shirt and pants, Vexen turned back to a small table to finish mashing several herbs into paste.

As he turned his back, Vexen felt piercing eyes on him and immediately whirled back around, searching for whoever was staring at him.

Vexen scowled slightly when he saw no one before slowly twisting around again to resume his work.

* * *

><p>Ground ivy, Burdock, Garlic, Leek, Wormwood, Thyme, Mint, Hemlock leaves.<p>

Roxas nodded, looking at the list as he headed into the woods skimming the edge of the village.

The bulk of the herbs should be fairly easy to get. Roxas knew what every herb looked like since Vexen had drilled it into his head to make sure that the blond knew a poisonous herb from a non-poisonous one.

Roxas started gathering a few of the herbs listed on the paper at the edge of the forest that lead into a vast open area, making sure they were placed into the basket in alphabetical order; Vexen was also very particular about that as well.

The blond paused when he heard snuffling sounds, immediately freezing when he spotted a Monstrous Nightmare sniffing around the nearby clearing.

The scarlet dragon idly walked around the woods, the claws on its wings supporting its weight since it lacked forelegs.

The tall spines along its back and snake-like tail waved with each step before the spines immediately stopped as the dragon halted, lifting up its long neck as it sniffed the air.

Roxas gripped the herb basket tighter as the Monstrous Nightmare's emerald eyes landed on him, the sharp teeth protruding from its lower jaw and four jagged horns extending from the back of its skull terrifying the blond.

Roxas had no specific reason why he was scared of Monstrous Nightmares, but he knew there were a lot of other Vikings that were scared of the dragon that had the uncanny ability to set itself on fire.

The dragon stared at the frozen Viking with a quiet growl, tilting its head slightly.

Roxas waited for the dragon to blast him with its fire, but became utterly surprised when the Monstrous Nightmare suddenly started to shift as the early dawn light shone down on it.

Right before his eyes, the dragon's shape altered and changed into a human-like form.

Roxas stared at the male a year older and several inches taller than him, dumbfounded as his mind tried to figure exactly what just occurred.

Had that really just happened?

The strange man was lanky with fair skin and shoulder length bright red hair styled into slicked-back spikes that revealed a widow's peak.

His emerald eyes stared at Roxas calmly, the purple reverse-teardrop markings beneath each eye standing out.

The redhead suddenly smirked, the two long fangs poking up from his bottom jaw retracting into his mouth as he rested a hand on his thin hip raising his other hand.

"Hey, baby. I'm Axel. A-X-E-L. Got it memorized?"

Roxas stared at the strange naked man dumbly as Axel tapped the side of his head after stating his name, not quite sure how to react to the dragon-turned-human flirting with him.

Finally, his mind made a decision on how to properly react to the situation.

Roxas screamed, throwing this basket of herbs at Axel before bolting for his life.

Axel looked slightly wounded as the basket hit his chest, staring after the fleeing blond.

What had he done to scare off the pretty blond?

Axel sniffed his arm as he turned around.

"Do I smell? It can't be any worse than Demyx."

* * *

><p>Roxas sighed as he finished the water and set the glass into the sink.<p>

After embarrassedly coming up with a lie on why he hadn't returned back with the basket of herbs, Vexen had sent Roxas home, obviously disappointed in the blond.

It was peaceful that night with no sign of a dragon raid happening and Roxas wanted to go to bed and forget the day ever happened.

He paused when he heard a knock on the front door, slowly heading toward it.

Who could it be at this time of night?

>Roxas opened the door and looked around when he didn't see anyone at the threshold.<p>

He looked down when he smelled something and spotted the basket Vexen had given him sitting on the ground filled with the herbs the medicine doctor had requested.

Roxas frowned slightly, picking up the basket and staring at it before looking toward the forest.

He remembered throwing the basket at Axel.

Had _he_ been the one to return it to him?

* * *

><p>And end chapter 4. I know I'm a bit later than that month length I think I promised in an earlier chapter or two, but at least it's not dragging into two months, right? If it does get to two months it's either cause I'm bored and deciding not to write or I'm focusing more on an original, okay?
**

Anyway, please read and review. :3

5. Screaming Flight

Chapter 5-Screaming Flight

I am sorry, I am more than a month late. School started back up on the 12th so I don't have much time to write.

However I will keep this up, okay? Updates may be scattered, but I won't abandon it for like, five months. If I do then remind me.

Also be on the lookout; soon I may put up a new alphabet story with the SephGen pairing~! Yay!

Animesaki is also helping me with that and I love her cause she puts up with me even though I'm pretty sure I'm annoying xD

I don't own HTTYD, KH, TWEWY, etc, etc.

Anywhoo, please read and review! :D

****Also, PS, happy belated VanRepli day! :3****

*** * ***

><p>There was a lot that Reiku didn't know about the world that he wished to someday learn.<p>

This, however, was not one of those things that he had wanted to learn.

The black-haired teen stared at him with a slightly tilted head, still sitting in a crouched position, while Sora appeared to be struggling to explain the situation, hands moving around in an effort to express what he wanted to say.

Riku just looked stunned, but had yet to move from his position, completely waiting for Reiku to panic or faint.

Or both.

Reiku looked between the trio, mouth opening and closing wordlessly as he still tried to form words, struggling to process what the Hel was going on.

He had been walking past Sora's house, trying to find out where his brother had gotten off to so early in the morning, and had heard Sora talking with someone who was repeating the words the brunet was saying slowly and awkwardly as if they had never even spoken words before.

Reiku had opened the door to Sora's house and had come across Sora speaking with the black-haired teen he had met in the forest a few days ago, Riku sitting on the floor nearby, casually watching the duo as if he was used to the situation.

All three had looked surprised when Reiku had made a squeaking sound, noticing the silveret standing at the threshold.

"Um, Reiku, we can explainâ€|" Sora started slowly, holding up his hands in a placating gesture.

Riku sighed, shaking his head as he crossed his arms, already starting to feel the dread building up.

So much for keeping this 'let's-teach-Vanitas-how-to-speak-human!' thing a secretâ€|.

"This is Vanitas." Sora said, gesturing to the black-haired teen.

Vanitas gave a small wave in response.

"He's my half-brother."

"Half-brother?" Reiku repeated skeptically, looking between Sora and Vanitas.

Wellâ€|they sort of did look a bit alikeâ€|.

"Yeah. Myâ€|"I mean, ourâ€|"mother was a Night Fury."

Reiku gave a doubtful look as he crossed his arms. "Sora, that's a dragon. Dragons and humans can't"

"Please just wait until afternoon!" Sora begged, clasping his hands together hopefully. "We'll show you then!"

Reiku sighed as Sora stared at him pleadingly, glancing to the side in order to avoid the brunet's gaze.

"Fine"

* * *

><p>Sora and Riku lead Reiku to a nearby clearing once afternoon had come, completely forgetting the fact that they had dragon training in less than an hour. Vanitas was eagerly awaiting their arrival in a clearing.<p>

"So what do you want to show me?" Reiku asked, looking a bit impatient as he waited for this big secret to be revealed.

How was coming to a clearing in a forest going to explain the insane things Sora was telling him?

"Just watch." Sora said eagerly, bouncing slightly on the balls of his feet.

Vanitas gave a quiet growl, looking at the trio with bright eyes.

Suddenly the boy started to change shape and shift, automatically dropping down onto four feet, until Reiku was left staring at a Night Fury right where Vanitas had been standing.

The Night Fury crouched down playfully, rear end wiggling as he gazed at the trio happily before becoming distracted and starting to chase his own tail.

Reiku shakily pointed at the human-turned-dragon, looking at Riku and Sora in disbelief.

"He's a dragon"

"Yeah. He's a dragon." Sora said eagerly, watching Reiku's reaction hopefully. "A lot of dragons shift to human form early dawn."

"Then back to dragon in early afternoon." Riku finished.

"I have Night Fury blood, but not enough that I can shift." Sora pouted slightly, obviously disappointed with his side of his mother's DNA. "But it's still pretty cool, right? Please don't freak out."

Reiku looked between Vanitas, who was sunning himself and watching them quietly, before looking at Sora and Riku.

Before any of them could react, Reiku collapsed.

"Aww, that's the opposite of freaking out!" Sora whined as Riku

sighed.

Riku had been waiting for his brother to faint at the news.

Vanitas slowly came over and sniffed Reiku's cheek before licking him with his large tongue.

Reiku instantly started batting at Vanitas in an attempt to stop him as he sat up, wiping his slobbered up face.

"Ugh, _gross_!"

Vanitas gave what sounded like a laugh, crouching down playfully before bouncing away.

Riku went over to Reiku, crouching down, and was about to help his brother stand when Reiku shoved him to the ground, looking furious.

"All this time, you _knew_!"

Riku remained quiet, almost as if he were contemplating his answer, before he straightened and sat up, crossing his legs.

"Yeah, I knew. For a long time."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"You were scared of dragons." Riku stared at Reiku earnestly. "I was just looking out for you, Rei."

Reiku scowled slightly, but didn't continue the argument.

He knew Riku was protective and if he had thought keeping something like this a secret was for the best, then Reiku had no choice but to forgive him.

Sensing that he was out of argument range, Riku sat beside Reiku and Sora sat on the other side of Riku, leaning against him.

Vanitas plopped down a few feet away, giving a quiet rumble as he rested his head on the grass.

Everything went into a peaceful state until Vanitas hopped to his feet as if struck by an idea of some sort.

Sora gave his half-brother a confused look, wondering what had gotten into Vanitas. "Van?"

Vanitas suddenly lowered his front half, wings lowered against his side, as he looked at Reiku expectantly.

Reiku stared at him in bewilderment, not quite sure what exactly the strange dragon-boy wanted from him.

"He wants you to ride on his back!" Sora squeaked ecstatically, shaking Riku as if hoping by doing that his excitement would pass from Riku to Reiku. "He never lets anyone ride on him!"

"I am _not_ _riding_ on him." Reiku said bluntly, leaning back

slightly.

"He won't hurt you." Riku encourage. "He just wants you to trust him."

"_Trust him_?" Reiku squeaked, pointing at Vanitas. "He's a dragon!"

Vanitas gave a low, whimpering growl, ear plates drooping.

Riku scowled at his brother, giving a disappointed look. "Now look, you hurt his feelings."

Reiku looked taken aback by the statement. "I hurt _his _feelings?!"

"Reiku!" Riku snapped.

Reiku growled, glancing at Vanitas skeptically before slowly inching toward him.

Vanitas gazed at him eagerly, apparently trying his hardest to remain still even as his tail waved like mad.

He lowered himself more as Reiku awkwardly swung his right leg over Vanitas's shoulders, trying to act like he was climbing onto a saddled horse.

Reiku slowly sat down, setting his hands on Vanitas's neck as the dragon slowly stood up.

Vanitas gave a low rumble, glancing up at Reiku expectantly, almost as if he were asking _Are you ready yet?_

Reiku hesitated before he slowly nodded. "Yeahâ€¦I think I'm readyâ€¦".

Vanitas slowly opened his wings, taking a few leisurely flaps as he lifted off the ground, trying to get used to having a passenger on his back.

Reiku gulped as the ground started to get smaller and farther away, digging his nails into the side of Vanitas's neck and glancing down, noticing Riku and Sora waving at him.

He lowered himself, pressing his legs against Vanitas's, terrified that he would slip off the dragon and fall to his death.

Vanitas gave a comforting growl, still going at a slow pace, making sure that he wasn't too high off the ground. He occasionally glanced back at the boy to see how he was doing, noticing that as they went along, Reiku was slowly starting to sit up a bit straighter, gazing around the new environment with awe.

Sensing how relaxed Reiku was becoming, Vanitas went a bit higher until he barely skimmed the white clouds hanging in the afternoon sky, allowing the silver-haired human to curiously touch them.

The dragon gave what looked like a smirk at the sight before his ears pricked up, vibrating.

Abruptly, Vanitas made a sharp turn, diving into a large dark cavern.

Surprised by the sudden movement, Reiku grabbed onto two of the stubby appendages on the side of Vanitas's face, the dragon giving a faint uncomfortable sound as Reiku glared at him.

"What the hell? Are you trying to make me fall off?"

Vanitas rumbled, glancing behind him as he heard the faint roars from several dragons flying outside the cave; it was a large flock returning from a kill.

Reiku heard the noises as well, turning to look behind him in surprise.

Vanitas had turned into the cave to avoid the dragons who would have been unpredictable in their behavior upon seeing a human riding on the back of a dragon.

The dragons would have surely made a meal out of the tiny human and probably would have killed Vanitas as well.

Reiku heard a loud crash beside him as something broke through the side of the cavern's wall and looked over his shoulder to see a pair of glowing red eyes chasing after them.

Vanitas followed Reiku's gaze, also noticing the dragon and immediately flapped his wings to start going faster as the unknown dragon roared and began to pursue them.

Vanitas's ears vibrated as he gave out low barking sounds, listening for a reply back as he took a sharp turn.

There was a crash as the dragon behind them slammed into the curve before it gave a furious roar.

Vanitas continued using his echolocation to his advantage over the obviously larger dragon, eventually shooting out of the cave's entrance, flying higher to avoid the other reptile as it also burst out of the cavern seconds later.

The dragon was enormous with a white hide, a long tail with multiple spines and a large body with red eyes and several jagged needle point teeth set into a strong jaw.

The dragon roared, opening its mouth to the fullest extent and Reiku could see that the dragon had three rows of teeth almost like a shark.

Reiku gasped quietly as he lowered himself a bit at the sight of the dragon.

"Screaming Deathâ€¦."

Screaming Deaths were a rare sight as they were supposed to be a heavily mutated, albino Whispering Death, a dragon less than half the size of the Screaming Death with spirals of barbed teeth set in the entirety of its huge mouth and its eyes were so pale they appeared to

be blind; Whispering Deaths also avoided the light while Screaming Deaths eagerly went after anything that was shiny but they were apparently massively intelligent as Screaming Deaths could not be fooled by the same trick twice.

The Screaming Death roared and snarled at them, showing its displeasure at having its home invaded by outsiders, small wings flapping occasionally while its massive tail turned like a rotor to aid in keeping its massive body airborne.

Vanitas bared his teeth, quietly growling back at the dragon, but made no move to attack.

He was not going to be the one to draw first blood if the Screaming Death wasn't going to go on the offensive.

The dragon growled again, narrowing its blood red eyes before suddenly launching at them.

Vanitas growled, before shooting upward to avoid the tackle, momentarily forgetting that he had a human on his back.

He glanced back at Reiku with a whimpering growl, checking to make sure he was okay.

Reiku gave a small nod as he securely held onto the Night Fury's neck, showing that he was all right.

Vanitas gave what looked like a nod back, turning and flying off as fast as he could, not quite going at his top speed.

The Screaming Death chased after them with a roar, wings steadily beating with strong strokes as its tail rotated quickly.

The Screaming Death suddenly got beneath them, easily seeming to catch up to Vanitas's incredible speed, flicking its head up to strike Vanitas.

The Night Fury yelped, momentarily becoming upended by the attack before quickly rolling sideways and turning around with a snarl.

Vanitas heard a scream and noticed Reiku plummeting toward the Screaming Death, the dragon waiting below the falling human with its mouth open eagerly.

The silver-haired teen must have slipped off when he had struggled to straighten himself!

Vanitas immediately sprang into action, shooting toward the Screaming Death and using the claws on his foreleg to grab Reiku's pant leg, the large dragon's jagged teeth just barely scraping the tip of his tail as the mouth snapped closed.

The Screaming Death snarled at Vanitas, glaring at the Night Fury.

How dare that night lizard interrupt its meal!

Vanitas turned around, gently helping the shaken Reiku onto his back,

giving a low rumble as he gazed at the silver-haired teen worriedly.

Reiku nodded as he settled onto Vanitas's back, still a bit shaken from the ordeal of falling off a dragon and almost being eaten by another.

Vanitas purred quietly before turning his attention back to the Screaming Death, giving a low snarl.

Just as the pale dragon was about to charge at the Night Fury, Vanitas shot it with a purple plasma blast, causing the Screaming Death's head to snap to the side from the powerful, targeted strike.

The Screaming Death appeared surprised by the strike before it shook its head and roared, about to attack again, only to be struck repeatedly with plasma blasts.

Vanitas continued bombarding the Screaming Death with his targeted attacks, not giving the dragon time to react and counterattack, continuing the assault until the Screaming Death turned and shot back toward its home with a pained roar.

The dragon disappeared back into the cave, the faint crunching of rock and soil echoing from the entrance as the Screaming Death screwed a new path in its nest.

Vanitas gave a low snort, smirking in triumph, as he turned and headed back to where Sora and Riku waited for their return.

Riku became concerned when he noticed his brother's pale face as Reiku shakily climbed down from Vanitas's back.

He immediately went up to his brother, setting his hands on the silveret's shoulders to steady him.

"What's the matter, Rei?"

"A Screaming Death attacked us."

"What?" Riku asked sharply, dropping his hands from Reiku's shoulders.

"But I thought there weren't any of them near our village!" Sora muttered, grabbing onto Riku's hand fearfully.

Riku debated on something mentally for several seconds before he sighed. "I may have to tell the Elder about this."

"Riku!" Sora protested.

"Not this this!" Riku corrected, looking slightly irritated. "I mean about the Screaming Death. I'll just make up a story about how we spotted it."

Sora gave a relieved smile, immediately hugging Riku.

Vanitas rumbled, licking Riku's face.

Riku gave a disgusted look at the dragon's way of saying thank you, but didn't make a move to wipe off the saliva as he turned to his brother.

"You should probably head home, Rei."

Reiku nodded, knowing it was best not to argue, and waved at Riku and Sora as he started heading out of the forest.

Vanitas watched him go, head tilted to the side almost as if he were wondering if he would get to see Reiku again sometime.

Reiku stumbled slightly when he bumped into someone, immediately stepping back with an apology already on his tongue before he froze when he noticed that he had bumped into Xehanort.

Reiku glanced down slightly as he wondered why Xehanort was there in the first place.

Xehanort rarely ever left his hut unless it was important.

"I'm sorry, Elder. I didn't see you there."

"And tell me, where have you been all day?" Xehanort gazed at Reiku with calculating eyes, waiting for the boy to say something wrong so he could pounce on him; he just knew Reiku and Riku were hiding something. "Zachary told me you missed class along with your brother and Sora."

"We were playing in the forest." Reiku replied automatically.

Well, not a total lie. They had been playing in the forest.

With a dragon.

"I'm sorry, Elder, it won't happen again."

Xehanort gave a small hum at that, straightening slightly and clasping his hands behind his back.

"Have you seen a Night Fury by chance?"

Reiku shook his head quickly, hoping that it wasn't too quick for the Elder to know that he was lying.

He was also hopeful that Xehanort couldn't hear his heart pounding loudly in his ears.

"Of course not, sir! I would tell you first if I did see one."

Xehanort stared at Reiku skeptically for several seconds before slowly nodding, briefly closing his eyes.

"Of course. You may leave now."

Reiku gave a small bow. "Thank you, sir."

Xehanort watched Reiku scurry off, amber eyes narrowed, before he turned his gaze to the nearby forest.

* * *

><p>Ventus immediately headed over to Xaldin's workshop after dragon class had wrapped up to get a few of his family's weapons sharpened so they were prepared in case of a dragon raid. He paused close to the blacksmith's workshop when he noticed Terra speaking with Xaldin while Lexaeus pounded a molten weapon inside the shop.<p>

The blond looked around, making sure there wasn't anyone else around or nearby, before heading over to the brunette as Xaldin disappeared back into the shop.

He hesitantly cleared his throat to get Terra's attention.

"H-hey, Terra."

Terra glanced at him and immediately perked up when he noticed Ventus, raising a hand in greeting.

"Hey, Ventus. What's up?"

Ventus blushed when he noticed the brunette gazing at him with his deep ocean blue eyes, averting his eyes to the ground as he started to stutter.

"O-ohâ€¦I was justâ€¦weaponsâ€¦sharpened, get! Yeahâ€¦|."

Dang it! Couldn't he at least attempt a simple conversation with his crush without getting his sentences all jumbled?

Terra chuckled quietly as Ven buried his face in his hands, obviously embarrassed at his failed attempt at starting a conversation.

So cuteâ€¦|

* * *

><p>And the end of this chapter! xD

All right, I hope you all enjoyed that and can't wait for the next chapter.

Please remember to read and review! :3

Until then~!

PS. As of now, this story is already past the 20K mark, yay~!

End
file.